



## **ASTHMA BASICS CHECKLIST**

August 26, 1998

### Visit 1

#### **EDUCATION**

- ☐ Key features of asthma:
  - Affects the airways
  - Inflammation of the airways (swelling and mucus)
  - Abnormally sensitive airways ((hyper-responsive)
  - Blocked airways
  - Reversibility
  - Chronic condition
- ☐ Explain what an asthma trigger is: a substance or circumstance that can cause inflammation and narrowing of the airways and lead to an asthma attack.
- ☐ Allergens, especially those found in the home, are among the most common asthma triggers. Explain what an allergen is and describe the common allergens that trigger asthma:
  - Dust mites
  - Pollens
  - Freshly cut grass
  - Cockroaches
  - Pet animal fur (cats, dogs, birds, etc.)
  - Mice and rats
  - Molds and mildew
  - Foods (not common)
- ☐ Describe other asthma triggers:
  - Exercise
  - Viruses and colds
  - Irritants
    - ◆ Tobacco smoke
    - ◆ Cleaning products
    - ◆ Air pollution
    - ◆ Wood smoke
    - ◆ Perfumes, deodorants, air fresheners and strong odors
  - Weather
    - ◆ Cold air
    - ◆ Dry air
    - ◆ Sudden weather changes
  - Strong emotions with laughing, crying, anger or fear
  - Heartburn
  - Dust
- ☐ Knowing about asthma triggers is one of the key steps to controlling asthma
- ☐ The goal of this project is to help you identify what triggers make your child's asthma worse. We will focus on those found in the home. Because your child spends lots of time in the home, triggers found in the home are especially important in causing asthma.

- ☐ It's not hard to identify the triggers that affect your child most. You can observe what triggers an attack. We will also arrange for your child to get free skin testing to see what specific substances cause allergies. In a skin test, a health professional scratches allergen into skin to see if a hive develops. We will check for several allergens: dust mites, cats, dogs, roaches, molds, alder, birch and grasses.
- ☐ Once we figure out which triggers are most important, the next step is to work together to get rid of the triggers so your child is not exposed to them in the home. This is what we will work on together over the next year.
- ☐ It only takes a few simple steps to cut down on allergen triggers:
  1. Identify the allergen or allergens that your child is sensitive to.
  2. Eliminate the worst allergen from the bedroom.
  3. Eliminate the worst allergen from other rooms.
  4. Take steps to eliminate other allergens from the house.
- ☐ What can be expected with a good control plan? If you control exposure to triggers and use asthma medications properly, you can expect your child to:
  - Be as physically active as anyone
  - Go to school every day
  - Be free of asthma symptoms like cough, wheezing and shortness of breath
  - Sleep all night without being woken up by asthma problems
  - Avoid asthma attacks and the need to go to the emergency department or hospital

#### **SUPPLIES**

- ☐ Asthma education pamphlets

#### **REFERRALS**

- ☐ None